

Spotlight

THE BUDGET ISSUE

Spring 2025

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The mission of Southwestern CSD is Learning for All: Engaging & Preparing for Future Success.

Our vision is Southwestern: A community providing a comprehensive & relevant education that enables every student to achieve.

INTEGRITY,
KINDNESS,
CONNECTION,
EXCELLENCE.



**Southwestern
Central School
District**

600 Hunt Road, WE
Jamestown, NY 14701
716-484-1136
www.swcsk12.org

Annual Meeting & Election

Southwestern Central School District's annual Meeting and Board of Education Election is scheduled Tuesday, May 20, 2025, between 7-9 a.m. and 2-8 p.m. in the Southwestern High School multipurpose room. A budget public hearing is slated Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at 6 p.m., also in the SWHS multipurpose room.



WHEN CLOTHESLINES BECOME LIFELINES: We are putting some attention on a couple of the best kept secrets at Southwestern Central School District. There are two growing resources available to all students quietly supported by donations from organizations and individuals. Learn more about our free clothing closets and how you can benefit and contribute.

Above: A \$1,000 Teacher Innovation Grant from the Southwestern Schools Education Foundation was awarded to the 222 Closet, where middle and high school students shop for free clothes, hygiene items, and snacks.



The Women's Club of Lakewood recently delivered used and new clothing to Southwestern Elementary's clothing closet in the health office.



SWCS Board of Education

Mr. Kurt Gustafson,
President
Dr. Elizabeth Laczi,
Vice President
Mr. Michael Carothers
Mr. Troy Durnell
Mr. Joshua Gesing
Mr. Richard Hartmann

Student ex-officio members:
Connor Young & Lucy Brown

MEETINGS May 2025

May 13: Budget Hearing &
Regular Meeting 6 p.m.
May 20: Budget Vote & Board of
Education Election

June 2025

June 10: Regular Meeting 6 p.m.
June 24: Work Session 6 p.m.

Registration Information

Applications for Universal
Pre-Kindergarten and
Kindergarten for the 2025-
2026 academic year at
Southwestern Elementary
School are available.

- UPK eligible birthdates:
December 2, 2020 -
December 1, 2021.
- Kindergarten eligible
birthdates: December 2,
2019 through December
1, 2020.

Paper application forms
are available at the SWES
office weekdays from 7:30
a.m. to 4 p.m. An online
registration link is also
available via the district
website.

Contact the SWES office
at 1-716-664-1881 with any
questions.

A Message from the Superintendent...

Dear Southwestern Community,

Thank you for your continued
support as our Trojan family plans
for another successful
academic year at
Southwestern Central
School District.

There is always so
much to celebrate,
appreciate and recognize
on our campus. Our
classrooms are busy
and our athletics teams
and creative arts
programming continue
to innovate and educate.
We are thankful to our
community's ongoing
support of our students and
staff. We strive to make
our budget issue as transparent and
easy to understand as possible for
all district residents.

Our Business Department, in
collaboration with our Board of
Education, prepared a fiscally
responsible 2025-2026 budget, while
ensuring our Trojans receive a top-
notch education.

This issue of The Spotlight
includes key highlights of our
proposed spending plan.

I believe that Southwestern CSD
is the heart of our community and
all qualified district residents can
exercise their right to vote on
Tuesday, May 20, 2025. The polling
station in the multipurpose room at
Southwestern High School will be
open from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and again
from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.,

The community is also welcome
to attend the budget public hearing
slated Tuesday, May 13, 2025, at 6
p.m., also in the multipurpose room
at SWHS.

*If you have any questions or
concerns about the budget, please
do not hesitate to reach out to me
directly at 1-716-484-1136 or via
email mdonahue@swcsc12.org.*

A FEW PROFESSIONAL & PERSONAL NOTES

I have spent the past several
months preparing for my
impending retirement
from Southwestern and
helping ensure a smooth
transition of leadership for
the 2025-2026 academic
year. I am so proud to end
my career as a Trojan,
and am confident our
district will continue to
excel under the guidance
of my successor, Molly
Moore, our current
Director of Instructional
Services.

In other leadership news,
we are also saying good-
bye to high school Principal Scott
Cooper, a district graduate who is
also ending his career in education
this summer. I am pleased that
current Secondary Principal Matthew
Kindberg will be stepping up to helm
SWHS and know our students will be
benefit from his expertise.

As our Board of Education
continues to proactively explore
partnerships and sharing of services
with neighboring districts, I am
excited to watch the Frewsburg-
Southwestern new combined
football team's first season under
new head coach Jake Burkholder.
Coach Burkholder, a longtime social
studies teacher and district alumni,
is ready to show our student-athletes
what they can achieve via this new
Trojans/Bears adventure.

What a joy it has been working
at Southwestern. I have mixed
emotions about leaving this
wonderful place, but am excited for
all the unknowns the future will bring.
But one thing I know for certain: In
retirement, I will continue to wear
red and blue and root for all our
students, staff and families. As we
like to say at Southwestern, "Once a
Trojan, always a Trojan."

Sincerely,
Maureen Donahue,
Superintendent of Schools



**MAUREEN
DONAHUE**

Stay in the Know with Social Media

Visit Southwestern Central School District's website at www.swcsc12.org and follow its Instagram, Facebook and X accounts @SWCSTrojans for the most up-to-date information about events, celebrations, meetings, opportunities, accomplishments, and more.

The 222 Closet at Southwestern High

The 222 Closet at Southwestern High School is overseen by teacher Beth Stockwell and is housed in a bright, welcoming space formerly used for home economics classes.

All students from the middle and high schools are welcome to shop at the store if they are in need of clothes, shoes, coats, personal care items, and food for the weekends. It is supported by staff, students, and community members. Stockwell's students occasionally assist with sorting and organization of the 222 Closet.

Community members going through their closets are encouraged to donate the following:

- hangers
- men's sweat pants and sweat shirts
- men's coats
- men's gym shoes in good condition
- women's sweat pants, yoga pants or leggings as well as



- sweat shirts
- women's coats
- women's gym shoes in good condition
- men's and women's underwear



Top left: A sign with a friendly welcome to the 222 Closet. Top right: An array of hygiene items is always available to all students at the high and middle schools. Left: A pile of clothing donations to be sorted with students' assistance.

and socks in new or like new condition.

- Any men's or women's personal care items.

Community members interested in donating items or funds to the 222 Closet should reach out to Ms. Stockwell at bstockwell@swcsc12.org or 1-716-664-6273.

Clothing Closet in the Health Office Southwestern Elementary



The clothing closet at SWES occupies a corner of the Health Office. A wide array of sizes is needed to meet student needs from Pre-K to fifth grade.

The free clothing and apparel closet at Southwestern Elementary School is overseen by Nurse Jessie Certo and is housed in the Health Office.

There is a high demand at SWES for pants, shorts, underwear, socks and gym shoes for our district's youngest students.

In addition, they could really use youth swim suits for boys and girls as well as towels for swim lesson days.

Community members interested in donating items or funds to the SWES clothing closet should reach out to Ms. Certo at 1-716-484-6822 or email jcerto@swcsc12.org.

2025-2026 Budget Information

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the annual meeting and election of the Southwestern Central School District, Chautauqua County, New York, will be held on Tuesday, May 20, 2025 between the hours of 7:00-9:00 a.m. and 2:00-8:00 p.m., prevailing time, in the Southwestern High School Multipurpose Room, located at 600 Hunt Rd., Jamestown, NY 14701, for purposes of voting on the budget for the fiscal year and electing one member of the Board of Education for a three-year term to commence May 21, 2025.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that all candidates for the office of member of the Board of Education shall be nominated by petition. Each petition shall be directed to the Clerk of the District, shall be signed by at least 25 qualified voters of the District, state the residence of each signer, and state the name and residence of the candidate. Each petition must be filed in the office of the Clerk of the District between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. not later than the 30th day preceding the annual meeting and election, or on the next succeeding business day; to wit, April 21, 2025.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the voting on the budget and other propositions will consist of voting on the following proposition, as well as other such matters as may be lawfully presented at the meeting:

PROPOSITION NO. 1 – BUDGET

Shall the following resolution be adopted, to wit:

RESOLVED, that the budget for the Southwestern Central School District, Chautauqua County, New York, for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026, as presented by the Board of Education, is hereby approved and adopted and the required funds therefor are hereby appropriated, and the necessary real property taxes required shall be raised by a tax on the taxable property in said District to be levied and collected as required by law.

PROPOSITION NO. 2 – SCHOOL BUSES AND RELATED EQUIPMENT

Shall the following resolution be adopted, to wit:

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education (the "Board") of the Southwestern Central School District, Chautauqua County, New York (the "District"), is hereby authorized to purchase school buses and related equipment for use in the transportation program of the District, including two (2) 77-passenger school buses (at a maximum estimated total cost of \$388,791.30), one (1) 35-passenger school bus (at a maximum estimated total cost of \$160,473.07), one (1) 66-passenger school bus (at a maximum estimated total cost of \$188,359.13), and to expend for all of such buses and related equipment an aggregate sum not to exceed the sum of \$737,623.50, being the aforesaid maximum estimated total cost, or so much thereof as may be necessary, shall be raised by the levy of a tax upon the taxable property of the District and collected in annual installments as provided by Section 416 of the Education Law, and, in anticipation of such tax, bonds



or other obligations (including, without limitation, obligations arising under leases, lease/purchase contracts or installment purchase contracts having a term of not more than five years) of the District shall be issued or entered into in accordance with applicable provisions of New York State law.

PROPOSITION NO. 3 – LIBRARY BUDGETS

Shall the following resolution be adopted, to wit:

RESOLVED, that pursuant to Education Law, Section 259, the Board of Education of the Southwestern Central School District is authorized to levy and collect an annual tax, year after year, separate and apart from the annual school district budget, in the amount of \$272,000, of which \$190,000 shall be paid to the Lakewood Memorial Library for the support and maintenance of that library and \$82,000 of which shall be paid to the Hazeltine Public Library for the support and maintenance of that library; with this appropriated amount to be the annual appropriation until thereafter modified by a future vote of the electors of the Southwestern Central School District.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that a public hearing for the voters of the District on the 2025-2026 budget will be held on May 13, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., prevailing time, in the Southwestern High School Multipurpose Room, 600 Hunt Rd., Jamestown, NY 14701.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that voting machines will be used to record the vote on the budget, on all propositions, and the election of members of the Board of Education.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Board of Education of this District has adopted Rules for the Use of Voting Machines and the Submission of Questions or Propositions to be Placed Thereon, and printed copies for general distribution in the District are available at the office of the District Clerk located in the District Offices, 600 Hunt Rd, Jamestown, NY 14701.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the election of

2025-2026 Budget Information

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

members of the Board of Education shall be held to fill one at-large vacancy created by the resignation of Board member Correy Miller. The candidate receiving the most votes shall begin serving their three-year term commencing May 21, 2025, and ending June 30, 2028.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that applications for absentee and early voting ballots may be obtained at the office of the Clerk of the District between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., prevailing time, except Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. Completed applications must be received by the District Clerk at least seven (7) days before the election if the ballot is to be mailed by the voter, or on the day before the election if the ballot is to be delivered personally to the voter. A list of all persons to whom absentee and early voting ballots shall have been issued will be available in the office of the Clerk of the District, where it shall be open for inspection by any qualified voter of the District between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., prevailing time, until the day set for voting, except for Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, and said list will be available at the polling place for the election.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the District's Board of Education will have prepared and completed a detailed statement in writing of the amount of money that will be required during the 2025-2026 fiscal year for school purposes, specifying the several purposes and the amount for each. The amount for each purpose estimated necessary for payments to Boards of Cooperative Educational Services shall be shown in full, with no deduction of estimated state aid. The amount of state aid provided and its percentage relationship to the total expenditure shall also be shown. Such statement shall be completed at least seven days before the budget hearing at which it is to be presented, and copies thereof shall be made available, upon request, to residents within the District during the period of 14 days immediately preceding the annual meeting and election, and may be obtained by any resident of the District in the District Office during the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., prevailing time, on and after May 6, 2025, excluding Saturdays and Sundays.

TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that military voters who are qualified voters of the school district may apply for a military ballot. Applications for military ballots may be obtained from the District Clerk's office and the military voter may designate a preference to receive the application by mail, fax, or email. Completed applications for military ballots must be received by the District Clerk or her designee by no later than 5:00 p.m. on April 24, 2025.

AND NOTICE IS ALSO GIVEN that the qualified voters of the District shall be entitled to vote at said annual meeting and election. A qualified voter is one who is (1) a citizen of the United States of America, (2) eighteen (18) years of age or older, (3) resident



The Board of Education of Southwestern Central School District is authorized to levy and collect an annual tax on the Lakewood Memorial Library (above) and the Hazeltine Public Library (below).



within the District for a period of thirty (30) days next preceding the annual meeting and election and (4) not otherwise disqualified from voting in school district elections. The District may require all persons offering to vote at the annual meeting and election to provide one form of proof of residency pursuant to Education Law Section 2018-c. Such form may include a driver's license, a non-driver identification card, a utility bill, or a voter registration card. Upon offer of proof of residency, the District may also require all persons offering to vote to provide their signatures, printed names, and addresses.

Estimated Tax Levy 2025-26

(Based on 2024-25 final assessment data and 2025-26 Busti preliminary assessments)

Budget: \$ 36,244,295

	2024-25 Assessment	Equal. Rate	Full Value (True)	Tax Levy/Town	% of Levy
Busti	\$1,041,138,270	100.00%	\$1,041,142,770	\$11,270,086.62	76.6096%
Ellicott	\$215,947,885	69.00%	\$312,970,123	\$3,387,816.25	23.0290%
Harmony	\$2,947,093	60.00%	\$4,911,822	\$53,169.13	0.3614%
Total	\$1,260,033,248		\$1,359,024,715	\$14,711,072	100.00%

	Tax Levy 2023-24	Tax Levy 2024-25	Tax Levy 2025-26	Dollar Change	Percent Change
\$	14,134,592	\$ 14,352,265	\$ 14,711,072	\$358,807.00	2.50%

	Tax Rate 2023-24	Tax Rate 2024-25	Tax Rate 2025-26	Dollar Change	Percent Change
\$	14.822320	\$ 14.621755	\$ 10.824727	-\$3.797028	-25.9683%

Tax Rates	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	Dollar Change	Percent Change
Busti	\$22.123078	\$22.495225	\$10.824774	-\$11.670451	-51.8797%
Ellicott	\$17.438145	\$17.831532	\$15.688120	-\$2.143412	-12.0203%
Harmony	\$20.730517	\$21.502580	\$18.041212	-\$3.461368	-16.0975%

Budgets	2023-24	2024-25	2024-25	Dollar Change	Percent Change
Revenue	\$ 19,699,206	\$ 21,393,442	\$ 21,533,223	\$ 139,781	0.653%
Tax Levy	\$ 14,134,592	\$ 14,352,265	\$ 14,711,072	\$ 358,807	2.500%
Budget	\$ 33,113,563	\$ 35,745,707	\$ 36,244,295	\$ 498,588	1.395%

Questions and Answers

Question: What would happen if the Southwestern voters did not approve the budget?

Answer: If the proposed 2025-26 budget was voted down, the Board of Education would have three options:

- Put the same budget up for a second vote
- Revise the budget and put it up for a vote
- The Board also has the option to adopt a contingent budget immediately instead of putting the budget up for a second vote

Note: As stated in the NY State Education Law, if the budget is defeated twice, then the district would have to operate on a contingent budget.

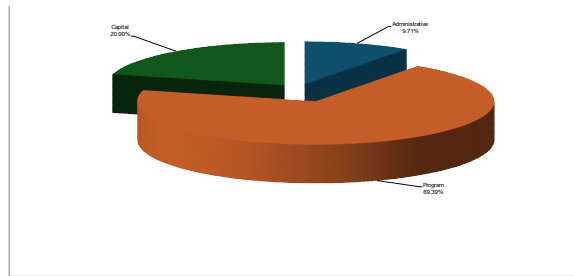
Question: What does a contingent budget imply?

Answer: The contingent budget for the 2025-26 school year is \$35,921,355. Under a contingency budget, the 2025-26 Tax Levy would decrease by \$175,648. Should the district go to a contingency budget, certain expenditures are required to be eliminated from the budget, including; equipment, non-essential maintenance, and non-reimbursed public use of school facilities. In addition to these items, the Board of Education can also eliminate or reduce expenditures not specifically authorized by statute.

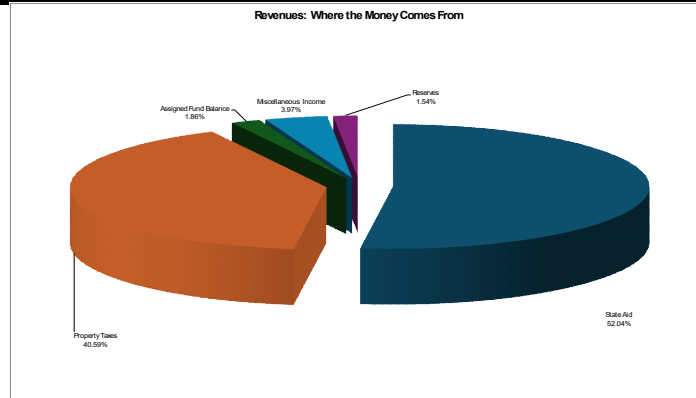
Board of Education Candidate Information

Mr. Kenneth Macdonald is running for the vacant seat for the 2025-2026 Board of Education election for Southwestern Central School District. More candidate information is to come via the district website.

Where the Money Comes From



	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	% of Proposed Budget
ADMINISTRATIVE COMPONENT				
Central Administration	\$528,291	\$552,660	\$507,090	1.40%
Instructional Administration	\$1,790,952	\$2,004,879	\$2,056,473	5.67%
Business Administration	\$849,989	\$872,725	\$882,777	2.44%
Legal & Public Communications	\$74,936	\$77,437	\$73,650	0.20%
Total Administrative	\$3,244,168	\$3,507,701	\$3,519,990	9.71%
PROGRAM COMPONENT				
Teaching	\$16,369,500	\$16,935,485	\$17,581,314	48.51%
Special Education	\$4,132,149	\$4,625,268	\$4,617,187	12.74%
Extra-Curricular/Community Service	\$532,504	\$697,163	\$859,626	2.37%
Pupil Transportation	\$1,749,394	\$1,880,057	\$2,092,489	5.77%
Total Program	\$22,783,547	\$24,137,973	\$25,150,616	69.39%
CAPITAL COMPONENT				
Operations & Maintenance	\$3,033,405	\$3,109,182	\$3,156,520	8.71%
Debt Service	\$3,952,443	\$4,890,851	\$4,317,169	11.91%
Interfund Transfers	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	0.28%
Total Capital	\$7,085,848	\$8,100,033	\$8,100,033	20.90%
TOTAL BUDGET	\$33,113,563	\$35,745,707	\$36,244,295	100.00%



	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
State Aid	\$17,673,636	\$19,142,458	\$18,860,871
Property Taxes	\$14,134,592	\$14,352,265	\$14,711,072
Assigned Fund Balance	\$450,000	\$550,000	\$675,000
Miscellaneous Income	\$720,235	\$1,398,019	\$1,438,601
Reserves	\$135,100	\$302,965	\$558,751
Total Revenue	\$33,113,563	\$35,745,707	\$36,244,295



Southwestern Telephone Directory

Business Office.....484-1136
District Office484-1136
District Office Fax .488-2442
Supt. Office Fax....488-2442
Special Education. 664-4675
Technology483-5473
Transportation763-8391

Elementary School Pre-K through Grade 5

Main Office664-1881
Health Office.....484-6822
Attendance484-6823
Fax.....487-3170

Middle School-Grades 6-8

Main Office664-6270
Health Office.....484-6841
Guidance/
Attendance.....484-6842
Fax.....487-0855

High School-Grades 9-12

Main Office664-6273
Health Office.....664-6275
Guidance Office/Career
Center.....664-6276
Attendance484-6861
Fax.....484-1167

**The Spotlight is
published through the
Board of Education
of the
Southwestern Central
School District**

**SOUTHWESTERN
CENTRAL
SCHOOL DISTRICT**
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Todd Crandall, executive director of the Chautauqua County School Boards Association; Ellie Rounds of Southwestern Middle School; and Kurt Gustafson, president of Southwestern's Board of Education at the March 8, 2025, legislative breakfast at Chautauqua Harbor Hotel.

Artistic Trojan Wins Logo Design Contest

Eighth-grader Ellie Rounds of Southwestern Middle School was recently named winner of The Chautauqua County School Boards Association's logo contest. Her logo was selected out of close to 40 submissions received by the CCSBA. Principal Greg Lauer of SWMS attended the recent CCSBA breakfast where Ellie was recognized. Ellie's logo was unveiled at the event and attendees enjoyed cookies displaying her creation.

Ellie's winning design and was selected from a pool of approximately 40 submissions from students throughout

the county, showcasing their exceptional artistic talent and creativity. The new logo will now represent the CCSBA in its ongoing efforts to support and advocate for quality education in Chautauqua County. In addition to the recognition, Ellie was awarded a \$150 gift card of her choice.

Todd Crandall, executive director of the CCSBBA, commended Ellie for her outstanding work, noting the logo's ability to effectively capture the spirit and mission of the association. The winning design will be implemented across all CCSBA platforms and materials.